

GRADE: All
TIME: 1-3 hours
SEASON: All

Observation Hike

National Science Teaching Standards

- A.** Science as **INQUIRY**
- B.** **PHYSICAL** Science
- C.** **LIFE** Science
- D.** **EARTH** Science
- E.** Science **TECHNOLOGY**
- F.** Science in **PERSONAL** and **SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE**
- G.** **HISTORY** and **NATURE** of Science

Background Information:

This observation hike is different every time a group goes out. The hike is mainly focused on what Springbrook has to offer (flora, fauna, history, different habitats, etc.). Depending on the length of the hike, there are many things to do and see as time permits.

Objective:

- For students to have an orientation to Springbrook, but also see where they fit into the natural landscape.
- For students to observe the natural surroundings of Springbrook.

Equipment:

- *Water bottles
- *Insect repellent
- A lot of energy
- Comfortable shoes

*Optional and seasonal, provided by the group leaders

Pre Activities

- Talk about appropriate dress for the Springbrook. For spring, summer, and fall, long-sleeved shirts, long pants and shoes or boots are highly suggested to protect against poison ivy, prickly bushes, and insects. For winter, be prepared for the cold and occasional snow with winter coats, gloves or mittens, hats, scarves, winter boots and even snowpants.
- Mushrooms, nuts, and berries are the only physical items that can be taken out of a state park. However, it is nice to leave with only memories and any litter you found.

Procedure:

1. Talk about behavior during the hike. This is a very exciting event for all the kids. One thing for them to keep in mind is the louder they are, the less wildlife they will probably observe.
2. Choose a leader for the hike, whether it is a CEC Staff member or a group leader. It is important to keep all the members of the group in the same area (less impact on nature and also less chance of losing someone from the group).
3. The observation hike is a wonderful time to point out the cool things about nature (landforms, plants, animals, etc.).
4. Another activity that can be done in conjunction with the observation hike is the “Special Place” activity. This activity focuses energy to what the students hear, see, etc.

Post Activity:

- Discuss the ownership of the park...everyone in Iowa! That means you! Discuss what state parks and national parks are. Using an Iowa map locate Springbrook State Park and others found in Iowa...using a U.S. map locate national parks.

Post Discussion:

- Discuss what you saw on your hike that you had never seen before.
- Explain how you connected to nature on your hike.
- Did you feel ownership in your park? How do you think it should be treated? How do people show respect for nature? How do they show disrespect for nature?
- What improvements do you feel the park needs? How could you go about making those changes?
- How much money does Iowa spend on its state parks yearly? Is that enough? Should more or less be spent? Explain.
- Do all states have state parks? Does Iowa have a national park? What defines a state park and a national park?
- What other parks have you been to? What is your favorite? Why?